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Sent: Friday, August 07, 2015 3:35 PM
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Gov. Martinez blasts feds for lack of communication on mine spill

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By **Dan Boyd / Capitol Bureau Chief**

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Contaminated water from a southwest Colorado mine spill is expected to flow into New Mexico today, and Gov. Susana Martinez is not happy with a federal agency that caused the incident.

A spokesman for the Republican governor said state leaders were not notified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency about the mine spill until nearly 24 hours after it occurred, and actually first heard about from an official with the Southern Ute Indian tribe.

“Governor Martinez hopes the EPA will be more cooperative and forthcoming moving forward as we work to address this situation and that the EPA will demand the same of itself as it would of a private business responsible for such a spill,” Martinez spokesman Chris Sanchez said in a statement.

Meanwhile, state Environment Secretary Ryan Flynn and State Engineer Tom Blaine were in Farmington and Aztec this morning.

They have told farmers and other water users along the Animas River — including public water users — to stop diverting water from the river until the contaminated plume has passed.

“Despite EPA’s late notification with no constituent details, water systems, area farmers, the Navajo Nation and others have all responded promptly and we will prevent contamination into our systems,”

Flynn said in a statement.

The mine waste spill caused one million gallons of orange-colored muck into Cement Creek, a tributary of the Animas River. EPA officials said a cleanup crew working to secure an entrance to the Gold King Mine accidentally released the mine waste, and have also claimed there was no threat to drinking water supplies from the spill.

The Animas River runs by Aztec and Flora Vista in New Mexico before flowing into the San Juan River near Farmington.